

Development of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan – An Analysis of Rituals

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I have adhered to the Honor Code for this assignment. – Satoru Uchida

In Japan, Jehovah's Witnesses is a part of the buzzword "cult." After the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japanese media was shocked because the gunman said he killed Mr Abe because of his relation to the Unification Church (also known as Family Federation, Moonism). His mother contributed about one million dollars to the Church, and he sought the chance to revenge against the Unification Church. After the case, Japanese media focused on high-demanding religious groups, not only the Unification Church but also Happy Science 幸福の科学, Jehovah's Witnesses, and so on. This rising social attention towards Jehovah's Witnesses is not only in Japan. Jehovah's Witnesses have been accused in various countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom. A group of people opened their mouths to say the members of Jehovah's Witnesses sexually abused them, and the cases were buried organizationally.¹ In the United States, some courts verdict Jehovah's Witnesses to pay compensation for those who suffered sexual abuse.^{2,3} More and more people worldwide are paying attention to Jehovah's Witnesses, and the mainstream arguments are often about criticism.

Not to leave any sort of abuse victims as a part of the buzzword, I would like to focus on Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan for this paper. This paper seeks to theorize why Jehovah's Witnesses is one of Japan's most popular Christian groups despite their aggressive and fundamentalistic teachings. Their fundamentalistic practice, such as door-to-door preaching work, makes Jehovah's Witnesses outstanding from other groups of Christianity. Why have

¹ "Jehovah's Witnesses sexual abuse 'covered up'," *BBC*, accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-england-birmingham-42027024>.

² Maria Sole Campinoti, "5 members of Jehovah's Witnesses congregations charged with child sexual abuse in Pennsylvania," *CNN*, accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/09/us/jehovahs-witness-child-sex-abuse-pennsylvania/index.html>.

³ Elizabeth Chuck, "\$35 million sex-abuse verdict puts spotlight on insular Jehovah's Witness community," *NBC*, accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/35-million-verdict-puts-spotlight-insular-jehovah-s-witness-community-n914841>.

Jehovah's Witnesses gained undeniable numbers of followers in Japan, where a majority of nationals deny their religiosity,⁴ with characteristic practices? This perspective and deep understanding of Jehovah's Witnesses in a given culture are essential to deal with the social problems it has caused. Simply pointing out structural issues and denying the practices from our modern, scientific lens is easy. However, it contradicts the idea of diversity or inclusion. Moreover, it will not solve anything because it is not a fundamental solution but concealment for a moment. Not to repeat the same and similar cases in the future, this view is necessary at this time when society is paying attention regardless of the attitude.

Before beginning the argument, I would like to state that this paper is not subject to denying, disregarding, or disrespecting any beliefs or organizations. This paper is not meant to be polemical against Jehovah's Witnesses. For those who believe in Jehovah's Witnesses as a representative of God, this paper is written by an apostate and is not suitable for active Jehovah's Witnesses.

Japan has nurtured a slightly different concept of religion from the Western world. However, religious practices - or rituals - are equal to or more important than Western religion. Thus, rituals could be an indicator of the adaptability of the religion in society. At the same time, rituals have been transformed, and some are now part of national culture. This point leads us to ask, what is ritual? According to Catherine Bell, "so-called ritual acts must be seen first in terms of what they share with all activity, then in terms of how they set themselves off from other

⁴ "International Social Survey Programme: Religion IV - ISSP 2018," ISSP Research Group, Data file Version 2.1.0, https://search.gesis.org/variables/exploredata-ZA7570_VarJP_RELIG. 63% responded "no religion." to the question, "Do you follow any religion?"

practices.”⁵ For this paper, I would like to elaborate on the definition of ritual above Bell’s argument. Rituals in this paper are 1) certain activities shared among certain groups of people and 2) activities that make the difference between Us and Them.⁶

Before diving into the argument, it is meaningful to grasp what Jehovah’s Witnesses is. The Britannica dictionary defines Jehovah’s Witnesses as “a millennialist group whose beliefs are based primarily on the apocalyptic sections of the Bible, notably Daniel and the Book of Revelation.”⁷ The official website of Jehovah’s Witnesses states that Witnesses⁸ “Believe that the kingdom of God is the real government in heaven, and ‘It will replace human governments and accomplish God’s purpose for the earth.’ (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10) It will take these actions soon, for Bible prophecy indicates that we are living in ‘the last days.’—2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:3-14.”⁹ In short, Jehovah’s Witnesses is a millennialist group based on Christianity but not focusing on this world’s benefits or social reconstruction. Instead, they are waiting for God’s kingdom on Earth after Armageddon. Jesus Christ has been present since 1914 and will be the king of God’s kingdom based on their interpretation.

Then, how many Jehovah’s Witnesses’ followers are in Japan? I will rely on the official statistics from Jehovah’s Witnesses because it is a single religious corporation in Japan. Single religious corporations do not list the number of teachers and followers in the Annual Statistics of

⁵ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 220.

⁶ Gumbiner, Jann P. D. “‘Us’ and ‘them’,” *Psychology Today*, accessed December 16, 2023, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-teenage-mind/201704/us-and-them>. Concept borrowed from social psychology.

⁷ “Jehovah’s Witness summary.” Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed December 16, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/summary/Jehovahs-Witnesses>.

⁸ In this paper, isolated “Witnesses” refers followers of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

⁹ Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, “What do Jehovah’s Witnesses Believe?”, accessed December 10, 2023, <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/jehovah-witness-beliefs/>.

Religion, created by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan. However, official data is reliable enough to know their presence in Japan since it reflects the decrease in the number of Witnesses. Official data of Jehovah's Witnesses claim that there are 214,359 Witnesses in Japan.¹⁰ This number is about 160% of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormonism) in Japan, with 130,550 followers and teachers, and about half of the sum of Catholics and Orthodox¹¹ with 441,649 followers and teachers.¹² It shows the unignorable population of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan as a form of Christianity.

Recent social movements regarding high-demand religious organizations in Japan push Jehovah's Witnesses into public space. The assassin of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe confessed that he shot Mr. Abe because of the relationship with the Unification Church (Moonism), and it turns out his mother donated about one million dollars, causing economic suffering to the assassin and his siblings.¹³ After this brutal case, Japanese society paid close attention to the *Syukyo Nisei* 宗教二世 or religious second-generation problems, and recently, Jehovah's Witnesses became one of those religious groups featured by the media due to accusations from former Witnesses about what they experienced in their childhood, and most of the cases align with the guideline published by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of Japan includes many examples of sexual abuse, psychological abuse, physical abuse, and neglect

¹⁰ Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, "Japan: How Many Jehovah's Witnesses are there?" , accessed December 16, 2023, <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/worldwide/JP/>.

¹¹ On the Annual Statistics of Religion, Catholics and Orthodox together mentioned as *Kyukyo* (旧教), means before Protestants.

¹² Agency for Cultural Affairs, *Annual Statistics of Religion*(Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, 2022), 80-81, 84-85.

¹³ "The Aunt of the Suspect Revealed Suspect's Mother Donated about One Hundred Million Yen by Selling Real Estates," *The Sankei Shinbun*, July 15, 2022, accessed December 16, 2023, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20220715-ARGTAEIUTF05FGDX7M53NJXQE4/>.

in the context of spiritual activities.¹⁴ Even Prime Minister Kishida talked about this problem in the House of Representatives and said, “In spite of the background such as religious beliefs, it(child abuse) is unacceptable”¹⁵ in terms of Jehovah’s Witnesses’ abusive teachings to the children. Japan Branch of Jehovah’s Witnesses commented on the recent news coverage that reports Jehovah’s Witnesses’ child abuse and violation of human rights are “false information.”¹⁶

We walked through the brief background of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan. Now, what sorts of rituals does Jehovah's Witnesses practice? There are several Japanese publications by ex-Jehovah’s Witnesses focused on the beliefs and rituals based on their experiences. This paper uses two autobiographical mangas written by Ishii and Tamo-san^{17, 18} to see what rituals Jehovah’s Witnesses practice and how they contribute to the expansion of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Japan.

Figure 1 has all the rituals retrieved from two mangas.¹⁹ I use two ritual categories in the figure based on my earlier definition. One, with a dark-tone green, is Jehovah’s Witnesses’ rituals or activities shared among Witnesses. Another one, with light-tone purple, is rituals that prohibit other rituals or social norms. In other words, rituals and activities that make the difference between Us and Them. Four rituals are categorized into rituals shared among

¹⁴ "Translation of the Guidelines for Spiritual-Related Child Abuses." Translated by Satoru Uchida, accessed December 16, 2023, <https://satouchida.github.io/2023/01/01/dec-28-jan-1/>.

¹⁵ Amane Shimazaki, "Prime Minister Kishida Mentioned Jehovah's Witnesses' 'Child Abuses' as 'Unacceptable in Spite of the Belief'" *Asahi Shinbun Digital*, November 22, 2023, accessed December 16, 2023, <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASRCQ5JJZRCQUTIL01N.html>. Translated by the author.

¹⁶ Bengo4.com, Inc. "Jehovah's Witnesses Refutes the Pointed Out 'Child Abuses' – 'some Judgmental People Spreading Wrong Information'," *Bengo4.com news*, November 21, 2023, accessed December 16, 2023, https://www.bengo4.com/c_18/n_16791/.

¹⁷ Ishii, Saya. *The Story of the Kid Who was Born into the Family Practicing Door-to-Door*, Kodansha Ltd., 2017.

¹⁸ Tamo-san. *I Believed in Cultic Religion – Why 'Second-Generation Jehovah's Witnesses' Trashed its Faith*. Tokyo, Japan: Saizusha Corporation, 2017.

¹⁹ The author translated all Japanese sentences and expressions into English.

Witnesses, and 19 rituals are into rituals that differentiate Us and Them. Figure 1 has columns that are dedicated to official publications to reduce biases as much as possible.

By examining sentences and paragraphs of official publications, I found Jehovah's Witnesses' characteristic way of explaining rituals. Official publications I chose this time almost always cite scriptures to support their argument. The only explanation that lacks scriptural citation is the definition of dating in a modern sense. It is reasonable that they cannot cite any scriptures forbidding the use of electronic devices in terms of communicating with the opposite sex. In terms of validity, it is a simple but great strategy to show that Jehovah's Witnesses is purely based on the Bible.

Now, I would like to focus on four shared rituals among Jehovah's Witnesses, colored dark-tone green. "Go to weekly meetings at kingdom hall" is similar to other religions' churches or temples. The meetings serve as not only a learning place similar to a classroom but also a social space utilized before and after the lectures and sessions. However, the other three rituals are not close to what ritual usually implies. A possible explanation for the remaining three rituals is that those rituals are in between the definitions mentioned earlier. Those three rituals could create tension between Us and Them, but in an internalized way, not explicitly differentiate Us and Them based on practices. In fact, none of them prohibit widely accepted social norms or ideas, but they contradict each other in several ways. For example, in Japan, it is expected to recognize that animals also have souls as humans do.²⁰ However, Jehovah's Witnesses' ritual and official sources suggest that they do not treat animals as humans because they believe animals

²⁰ Parry, Richard L. "Ghosts of the Tsunami," London Review of Books, Vol. 36, No. 3, accessed December 16, 2023, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v36/n03/richard-lloyd-parry/ghosts-of-the-tsunami>.

are created for human welfare. By following this ritual, Witnesses might find themselves different from their former selves and Japanese, resulting in the perception of Us as Jehovah's Witnesses and Them as a majority of Japanese.

Moving on to rituals that make Us and Them, there seem to be no similarities between Jehovah's Witnesses and Japanese rituals. Still, those rituals contain very few ideas that do not contradict indigenous moral standards. "Not to wear 'appealing' clothes" and "no sexual interaction before the marriage" could be good examples. Penton mentioned similar points, suggesting that conservative Buddhism and Confucianism are rooted in some Japanese minds as "old-time virtues," so the Jehovah's Witnesses' rituals fit their norms to a limited extent.²¹ These shared values might be the first step for some Japanese Witnesses to recognize Jehovah's Witnesses as a "true religion." However, it is not persuasive enough to explain the exponential expansion of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan, which happened from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s²². It was right after the rapid economic growth known as the Japanese economic miracle, and Japan already had the fourth-largest economy in the world in 1970. The cases of Germany and Italy suggest that economic prosperity distracted people from religious interests.²³ However, in Japan, the situation was completely different. There could be other factors in Japanese society.

Ian Reader, specializing in religion in modern Japan, gives us a hint to answer this question. He suggests that the Japanese struggled with cultural identity while being proud of

²¹ Penton, M. James. *Apocalypse Delayed*, 3. ed, Toronto, Canada: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2015, 351.

²² Yamaguchi, Mizuho, *Modern Japan and Jehovah's Witnesses: its Historical Progression*. Kyoto, Japan: Hozokan, 2022, 271.

²³ Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed*, 113-114.

national economic achievements after the Japanese economic miracle. After the loss of WW2 and following the Humanity Declaration, a considerable amount of Japanese lost national pride and religious anchors that were tightly linked together. Then, economic success and prosperity right after the war gave them national pride but spiritual alternation. Under such a social environment, several new indigenous religions of the 1980s had a strong focus on notions of post-death salvation or transformation of society that met the needs of a certain number of Japanese at that time.²⁴ Even though Jehovah's Witnesses is a new religion from the outside, his theory aligns with Jehovah's Witnesses. Jehovah's Witnesses promises eternal life after Armageddon, which assures both post-death salvation and complete social reconstruction. In addition to that, Jehovah's Witnesses also provide Western identity as a sort of Christianity^{25, 26}, which means Jehovah's Witnesses is not tied with nationalism or Japan, while some Japanese new religions are. Some Japanese might distrust indigenous religions because of National Shinto and its consequences. Jehovah's Witnesses carries Western identity as an outsider and new standard as a part of global society, which Japan was coming back. They might also need to redefine their identity not as defeated but as something new, corresponding to the famous phrase by the Japanese government, "no longer be termed postwar."

Reader continues that Japanese new religions generally use comprehensible teachings that address the concerns of individuals of all ages, such as straightforward navigation of their lives, why misfortune happens, and why people have to suffer. New religions also cultivate a sense of community belonging in a modern, urban environment.²⁷ For those Japanese at that time

²⁴ Reader, Ian. "Japanese New Religions: An Overview." *World Religions and Spirituality Project*, 2015, 19-20, 26.

²⁵ Wilson, Bryan and Haoues Seniguer. *Aspects of Kinship and the Rise of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan*, Vol. 24 SAGE Publications, 1977, 101-103.

²⁶ Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed*, 351.

²⁷ Reader, "Japanese New Religions: An Overview," 22-23, 27-28.

who gathered in the city to get a job and were getting used to an economically enriched life, Jehovah's Witnesses might be the perfect match because of its practical teachings and close communities ready to welcome new members with weekly meetings. Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings or rituals are also clear and ready to practice despite the fact that it might not be easy. Furthermore, as Figure 1 suggests, most official sources of rituals cite multiple scriptures to indicate that all the publications are based on the Bible so that Witnesses could see Jehovah's Witnesses' rituals as orders from God.

The figure of the United States could be another explanation for rapid growth. Just after WW2, the United States was the enemy that killed and nuked many Japanese citizens. However, for some reason, the United States became supportive of Japan. Despite the United States's original aim being against communism and the Korean War, most of the Japanese at that time enjoyed incredibly rapid economic growth under aid from the United States. Some Japanese might shift their internal image of the United States from negative to positive or even aspiration. One exited Jehovah's Witnesses interviewed by Yamaguchi said the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses has the world headquarters in the United States under "God's will" in terms of maximizing the chance to spread "the Truth" around the world.²⁸ The interviewee did not express the aspiration to the United States in a direct way, but it implies that some Japanese Witnesses saw the United States as a country selected by God. This theory might partly explain the stagnation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan from the 1990s to now. Plaza Accord, signed on 1985, marked the beginning of the continuous economic depression of Japan today. At that time,

²⁸ Yamaguchi, *Modern Japan and Jehovah's Witnesses: its Historical Progression*, 194, 240-241. Translated by the author.

some Japanese might change their attitude towards the United States again, and the Americanness of Jehovah's Witnesses might be working negatively.

This paper aims to figure out why Jehovah's Witnesses is widely accepted in Japan in spite of its fundamentalistic rituals. Despite the number of rituals collected from two manga, the paper could not fully examine and discuss how those rituals related to the expansion of Jehovah's Witnesses. The paper seeks the possibilities of the growth of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan in shared values, need for community, spirituality without nationalism, and aspirations towards the West and/or the United States. Interestingly, the listed rituals in Figure 1 mostly belong to the second definition of ritual, the differentiation of Us and Them. That shows the alienness of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan. Simultaneously, I also believe the arguments of this paper imply the necessity of the rituals that make Us and Them in terms of fulfilling the need of some Japanese to belong to something other than Japan. More research focused on rituals that make Us and Them are necessary to break down the factors of the success of Jehovah's Witnesses. In addition to that, the effect of socioeconomic backgrounds and status of each individual who became part of Jehovah's Witnesses would give meaningful suggestions for future studies that focus on why Jehovah's Witnesses attracted not a small amount of Japanese from what sort of background. Lastly, again, Jehovah's Witnesses and its followers are one of the religious communities in Japan and the world, and I believe freedom of thought must be protected and practiced. Even though it seems problematic to society, it is one of the barriers that we have to overcome to achieve a truly diverse society in Japan or the world. Suppressing those minority religions might be the first step of a totalitarian regime. As a Japanese, I hope Japanese society supports and pushes its society to be more diversified.

<Figure 1> Rituals retrieved from Ishii and Tamo-san.

Rituals	Source	Official Publications	Source from official website	Additional Comments
Avoid hanging out with secular friends	Ishii, p4-9.	After all, to remain close friends with someone, you need to share that one's interests and values. If you forge close friendships with people who don't adhere to your Scriptural beliefs and standards, such association is bound to affect your conduct. (Proverbs 13:20) For good reason, the apostle Paul wrote: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers."—2 Corinthians 6:14.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. "What should I Know about School Friendships? – Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY." In Questions Young People Ask—Answers that Work, Volume 2, 144. United States of America: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., accessed November 23, 2023, https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102008113 .	
Not to wear "appealing" clothes	Ishii, p10-12.	We should choose “appropriate dress, with modesty and soundness of mind,” and maintain a clean appearance that reflects our “devotion to God.” (1 Timothy 2:9, 10) Consider these four principles: (1) Our dress should be “appropriate.” As you have observed at congregation meetings, Jehovah's people have different tastes, but our dress and hairstyles show respect for the God we worship. (2) Dressing “with modesty” means our appearance would not be sexually provocative, nor should it draw too much attention to ourselves. (3) We show “soundness of mind” when we do not adopt every fad of dress and grooming that comes along. (4) Our appearance should always reflect our “devotion to God,” indicating to others that we worship the true God.—1 Corinthians 10:31.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2021. Enjoy Life Forever! —An Interactive Bible Course. July 2023 Printing ed. Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 3. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102021252#h=1:0-48:71 .	author note: the bold area is from the original website

Go to weekly meetings at Kingdom Hall	Ishii, p13-15	As another example, consider our obligation to attend Christian meetings, which you know are important. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Have you thought of how that involves meekness and modesty? Meek ones are humble enough to accept instruction and then to apply what they learn, thus practicing Jehovah's judicial decision. One who is modest, recognizing his limitations, will appreciate his need for the encouragement and the knowledge that are available through the meetings.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2006. Live with Jehovah's Day in Mind. September 2014 Printing ed. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.	
		One way we receive support is by attending our meetings. (Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.) When we feel discouraged—as we all do at times—meetings can lift our spirits. We are encouraged by the heartfelt comments given by our brothers and sisters. The Bible-based talks and demonstrations that they present strengthen our determination to serve Jehovah. And our upbuilding conversations before and after the meeting encourage us. (1 Thess. 5:14) In addition, our meetings give us the opportunity to have the joy that comes from helping others. (Acts 20:35; Rom. 1:11, 12) Our meetings help us in other ways too. They improve our battle skills, so to speak, by equipping us for the ministry. For example, we learn to use the tools in our Teaching Toolbox effectively. So prepare well for congregation meetings. During the meeting, listen carefully. After the meeting, apply the training you received. By doing such things, you will become “a fine soldier of Christ Jesus.”—2 Tim. 2:3.	Corkern, L. Harold and L. Mark Questell. 2020. "Jehovah Will Protect You—How?" The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) March 2021, 28.	
Animals cannot reincarnate in paradise because animals are created to fulfill human	Ishii, p41, 42	God-fearing men see in animals part of God's generous provision for human welfare. Animals have served man as burden bearers, as sources of food and clothing, as sanitation agents, and as helpers in the vital activities of plowing and harvesting. Their variety of form and color has delighted his eye; their habits and	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2018. Insight on the Scriptures Volume 1. March 2021 Printing ed. Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.	

needs		instincts have been and still are an extensive field for inquiry into the marvels of God's creative work. Though animals die in the same manner as man, they do not share his hope of a resurrection.—2Pe 2:12		
Christmas is a bad festival, and there is no Santa clause	Ishii, p43; Tamo-san, p88, 89	<p>Why don't Jehovah's Witnesses celebrate Christmas?</p> <p>Jesus commanded that we commemorate his death, not his birth.—Luke 22:19, 20.</p> <p>Jesus' apostles and early disciples did not celebrate Christmas. The New Catholic Encyclopedia says that "the Nativity feast was instituted no earlier than 243 [C.E.]," more than a century after the last of the apostles died.</p> <p>There is no proof that Jesus was born on December 25; his birth date is not recorded in the Bible.</p> <p>We believe that Christmas is not approved by God because it is rooted in pagan customs and rites.—2 Corinthians 6:17.</p>	<p>Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.</p> <p>"Why Don't Jehovah's Witnesses Celebrate Christmas?" . Accessed December 1, 2023. https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/why-not-celebrate-christmas/.</p> <p>See also: "The Truth About Christmas". Awake!, 2010. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/102010442.</p>	
Not to celebrate birthday	Ishii, p44; Tamo-san, p88, 89	"Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays because we believe that such celebrations displease God. Although the Bible does not explicitly forbid celebrating birthdays, it does help us to reason on key features of these events and understand God's view of them. Consider four of these aspects and related Bible principles. ..."	<p>Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.</p> <p>"Why Don't Jehovah's Witnesses Celebrate Birthdays?" . Accessed December 1, 2023. https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/birthdays/.</p>	
Whip the child if they do not obey the parents, especially in regard to the sacred works	Ishii, p58-68; Tamo-san, p60-63	All around us we see the sad consequences of excessive and misplaced permissiveness. So we should be able to appreciate the truthfulness of the Bible's statement that "he who loves [his child] is careful to discipline him." (Prov. 13:24, NIV) It is truly loving for parents, in a child's early years, to commence helping the youngster to recognize authority and to realize that there must be reasonable limits to freedom. The brief pain of firm but not harsh spankings	<p>Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.</p> <p>1979. "Should Children be Spanked?" Awake!—1979, 28. Accessed December 1, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101979330.</p>	author's note: I believe this ritual is diminished now.

		when a young child needs such is certainly better than the grief that comes if, in teen-age or later years, he has not learned those lessons.		
		Different children require different kinds of discipline. Some are not “corrected by mere words.” For them, the occasional punishment administered for disobedience may be lifesaving. (Proverbs 17:10; 23:13, 14; 29:19) A child, though, should understand why he is being punished. “The rod and reproof are what give wisdom.” (Proverbs 29:15; Job 6:24) Moreover, punishment has boundaries. “I shall have to chastise you to the proper degree,” said Jehovah to his people. (Jeremiah 46:28b) The Bible in no way endorses angry whippings or severe beatings, which bruise and even injure a child.—Proverbs 16:32.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 1996. The Secret of Family Happiness. 2012 Printing ed. Accessed December 1, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1101996024#h=28:0-28:608 .	
Not to attend some part of sports day because they are "competitive"	Ishii, p70-72	For instance, you may like sports, and that attraction is easily understood. Sports can be fun and exciting. What, though, if you are attracted to certain sports because of their aggressive competitiveness, excessive risk taking, high rates of injury, riotous celebrations, nationalistic fervor, or similar “ingredients”? After examining what is involved, you would likely decide that it would be hard to harmonize your thinking with Jehovah’s way of thinking and with the message of peace and love that we preach to others. (Isa. 61:1; Gal. 5:19-21) On the other hand, if a certain leisure activity is made up of “ingredients” that are wholesome in Jehovah’s eyes, then such recreation may well be beneficial and refreshing to you.—Gal. 5:22, 23; read Philippians 4:8.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2011. "Is Your Recreation Beneficial?" The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Study Edition, October 15, 9. Accessed December 1, 2023. https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/w20111015/Is-Your-Recreation-Beneficial/#p12 .	author's note: what is commonly understood in Japan: 騎馬戦 and cheering at the sports day is not suitable because Isaiah 2:4 and Matthew 5:9

Not to attend to singing the national anthem/school song, flag salute because they are idolatry	Ishii, p73	<p>"Even though we do not salute the flag of any nation, this certainly is not meant to indicate disrespect. We do respect the flag of whatever country we live in, and we show this respect by obedience to the country's laws. We never engage in antigovernment activity of any kind. In fact, we believe that present human governments constitute an "arrangement of God" that he has temporarily permitted to exist. So we consider ourselves under divine command to pay taxes, tribute and honor to such "superior authorities."—Romans 13:1-7."</p> <p>"A national anthem often is, in effect, a hymn or a prayer set to music. The Encyclopedia Americana (1956) says: "Love of fatherland and pride in one's country are the keynotes of most national anthems, and in many, religious feeling is blended with patriotic sentiment." Actually, patriotic songs express the same fundamental ideas that are embodied in the pledge of allegiance to the flag. And since there is no Scriptural basis for the nationalistic pride that has so divided our world, we do not join in singing songs that extol any earthly nation.—Acts 17:26; John 17:15, 16."</p>	<p>Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. School and Jehovah's Witnesses Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 2, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1101983034.</p>	
Not to vote, even for school council	Ishii, p73	<p>In many schools, students are voted into an office or a position, such as class president. Some schools have small-scale political campaigns, including campaign buttons and posters advertising candidates. The purpose is to familiarize young people with the machinery of politics. However, Witness youths do not mix in school politics, either by accepting an elective office or by voting others into office. So if either nominated for or elected to an office, they tactfully decline. In this way they follow the example of Jesus who withdrew when the people wanted to make him king.—John 6:15.</p>	<p>Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. School and Jehovah's Witnesses Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 2, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1101983034.</p>	

Not to participate in Tanabata(star festival)/中: Qixi	Ishii, p73; Tamo-san, p88, 89	Aminata is a 15-year-old student in Guinea-Bissau. When she was 13, her art teacher asked the class to draw masks and other items related to carnival celebrations. Instead, Aminata drew a scene with animals and plants and then wrote “Paradise” on her drawing. When the teacher collected the drawings, he told Aminata that her drawing was off topic and gave her a mark of zero. After class, Aminata went to see the teacher and asked, “Who is carnival for?” “Pagans,” answered the teacher. Aminata replied: “I am not a pagan, so I don’t participate in these kinds of festivals. I believe that God will soon transform the earth into a paradise, and that is what I drew.”	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2016. 2017 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses. September 2016 Printing ed. Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 2, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/pc/r1/lp-e/1200275099/212/0 .	
Not to eat certain food such as Whale meat (Japan has a culture of eating whales)	Ishii, p73	We show respect for blood by not eating it. In the Law that Jehovah gave the Israelites, he commanded: “If one of the Israelites . . . is hunting and catches a wild animal or a bird that may be eaten, he must pour its blood out and cover it with dust. . . . I said to the Israelites: ‘You must not eat the blood of any sort of flesh.’” (Leviticus 17:13, 14) God’s command not to eat animal blood, first given to Noah some 800 years earlier, was still in force. Jehovah’s view was clear: His servants could eat animal meat but not the blood. They were to pour the blood on the ground—in effect, returning the creature’s life to God.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2014. What does the Bible really Teach?. October 2016 Printing ed. Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 2, 2023. https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/bible-teach/respect-life-gods-view-abortion-blood/#p18 .	
No sexual interaction before the marriage	Ishii, p89; Tamo-san, p74	2. What is sexual immorality? The Bible tells us that “those who are sexually immoral . . . will not inherit God’s Kingdom.” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Bible writers who wrote in Greek used the word por-nei’a to describe sexual immorality. That word includes (1) sexual relationsa between people who are not married to each other, (2) homosexuality, and (3) bestiality. We please Jehovah and benefit ourselves when we “abstain from sexual immorality.”—1 Thessalonians 4:3.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2021. Enjoy Life Forever! —An Interactive Bible Course. July 2023 Printing ed. Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 3, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102021241#h=7 .	

Avoid musturbation	Ishii, p89	Some youths attempt to alleviate sexual arousal by means of masturbation. But serious problems can result from this. The Bible urges Christians: “Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness.” (Colossians 3:5) Masturbation is the very opposite of ‘deadening sexual appetite.’ Indeed, it stimulates and nurtures that appetite!	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. "How can I Keep My Mind Off Sex?" In Questions Young People Ask—Answers that Work, Volume 2, 239. United States of America: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 3, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102008131#h=9 .	
Avoid sitting next to the opposite sex person	Ishii, p89; Tamo-san, p74	Really, dating is any social activity in which your romantic interest is focused on one particular person and that person’s interest is focused on you. So the answer to all three questions listed above is yes. Whether on the phone or face-to-face, in the open or in secret, if you and a friend of the opposite sex have a special romantic understanding and communicate regularly, it’s dating.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. "Am I Ready to Date?" In Questions Young People Ask—Answers that Work, Volume 2, 15. United States of America: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 3, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102008091 .	
Very detailed descriptions of musturbation and sexual interaction in the materials that children are supposed to read with adults	Ishii, p90, 91	We also need to be obedient when dealing with members of the opposite sex. We know that God’s Word forbids fornication. However, it is easy to let an obedient spirit lapse into a permissive one. For instance, some youths have engaged in oral or anal sex or mutual masturbation, rationalizing that these acts are not so bad because they think they are technically not “having sex.”	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2008. "Will You Hold Fast to Your Integrity?" The Watchtower—Study Edition December 2008, 9. Accessed December 3, 2023. https://www.jw.org/finder?wtllocale=E&docid=2008921&srctype=wol&srcid=share&par=13 .	
Not date someone who is not Jehovah’s Witnesses	Ishii, p99	If you’re one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, what are your spiritual attributes? Do you take the initiative to read God’s Word, to engage in the ministry, and to participate at Christian meetings? The person you marry deserves nothing less than a spiritually strong partner.—Read Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. "Am I Ready to Date?" In Questions Young People Ask—Answers that Work, Volume 2, 18. United States of America: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of	

			New York, Inc. Accessed December 3, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102008091 .	
		Christians who want to marry are commanded to choose only a fellow believer. (1 Corinthians 7:39) Jehovah's Witnesses view this command as referring not merely to a person who respects our beliefs but to one who shares and practices those beliefs as a baptized Witness. (2 Corinthians 6:14)	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. "Do Jehovah's Witnesses have Rules about Dating?", accessed December 3, 2023, https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/jw-dating/ .	
Not to marry when Witnesses are young	Ishii, p105	The Bible uses the phrase "the bloom of youth" to describe the period of life when sexual feelings and romantic emotions first become strong. (1 Corinthians 7:36) To maintain close association with one particular member of the opposite sex while you're still in this phase can fan the flames of desire and lead to wrong conduct. True, that might mean little to your peers. Many of them are all too eager to experiment with sex. But you can rise above that kind of thinking! (Romans 12:2) After all, the Bible urges you to "flee from sexual immorality." (1 Corinthians 6:18, New International Version) By waiting until you're past the bloom of youth, you can "ward off calamity."—Ecclesiastes 11:10.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. "Am I Ready to Date?" In Questions Young People Ask—Answers that Work, Volume 2, 17. United States of America: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 3, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102008091 .	
Not to practice death ritual	Ishii, p113-118	While it is commendable to visit the bereaved so as to provide personal comfort, this does not require that a small funeral service be conducted at the home of the deceased every night prior to the actual funeral. Doing this may stumble observers, since it may give them the impression that the participants do not really believe what the Bible says about the condition of the dead.—1 Corinthians 10:32.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 1997. "A Christian View of Funeral Customs." The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom—1998, 23. Accessed December 3, 2023. https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1998525#h=26 .	

		Each Witness decides for himself, based on his own Bible-trained conscience. (1 Timothy 1:19) However, we do not share in religious ceremonies that we feel are out of harmony with the Bible.—2 Corinthians 6:14-17.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. "How do Jehovah's Witnesses View Funerals?", accessed December 3, 2023, https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/funeral/ .	
Not to accept blood transfusion	Ishii, p121-124; Tamo-san, p100, 101	Jehovah's Witnesses understand that "abstaining from . . . blood" involves more than not eating or drinking it. It means not accepting blood transfusions, not donating blood, and not storing our own blood for transfusion. It also means not accepting transfusions of any of the four main parts of blood—red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2017. "Do You Value Life as God does?" In How to Remain in God's Love. January 2018 Printing ed., 92. Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 3, 2023, https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/in-gods-love/value-life-and-blood/#p14 .	
Not to join "secular/satanic" things, even if it's just a student activity at the school	Tamo-san, p34	To keep separate from the world while they are in school, most young Witnesses choose not to participate in extracurricular activities. This may be difficult for classmates and teachers to understand. However, pleasing God is what counts. It means that you will exercise your Bible-trained conscience and be resolved not to become involved in worldly competition or nationalism. (Gal. 5:19, 26)	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2019. "'Do all Things for God's Glory'." In Organized to do Jehovah's Will. November 2021 Printing ed., 137, 138. Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Accessed December 3, 2023, https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1102014943#h=30 .	

<p>Not to love secular people even if they are family / Not to interact with those who "disfellowshipped" or exited Jehovah's Witnesses even they are family</p>	<p>Tamo-san, p38, 122</p>	<p>Our loyalty to Jehovah can be greatly tested when a loved one is disfellowshipped. Jehovah's instruction to Aaron provides a clear message to those who must cut off association with a disfellowshipped relative. Our love for Jehovah must be stronger than our love for unfaithful family members.</p>	<p>Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2020. "Love for Jehovah Stronger than Love for Family." Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook—2020, 2. Accessed December 3, 2023, https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/202020443.</p>	
		<p>If the child is a minor and is living at home, you will naturally continue to take care of his physical needs. He also requires moral training and discipline, and you have the responsibility to provide these. (Proverbs 1:8-18; 6:20-22; 29:17) You may want to conduct a Bible study with him, involving his direct participation. You can draw his attention to various scriptures and to the publications provided by “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matthew 24:45) You can also take the child with you to Christian meetings and have him sit with you. All of this can be done in hopes that he will take Scriptural counsel to heart.</p> <p>The situation is different if the disfellowshipped one is not a minor and is living away from home. The apostle Paul admonished Christians in ancient Corinth: “Quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man.” (1 Corinthians 5:11) While caring for necessary family matters may require some contact with the disfellowshipped person, a Christian parent should strive to avoid needless association.</p>	<p>Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2007. "Remaining Steadfast when a Child Rebels." The Watchtower—Study Edition, 20. Accessed December 3, 2023, https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/w20070115/Remaining-Steadfast-When-a-Child-Rebels/#p22.</p>	

Reluctant to send the children into higher education	Tamo-san, p68-70	A Bible proverb says: “The shrewd one sees the danger and conceals himself.” (Proverbs 22:3) Jehovah’s Witnesses feel that the environment in some universities or similar centers of higher learning can pose moral and spiritual dangers. For that reason, many Witnesses choose not to immerse themselves or their children in such an environment.	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. "How do Jehovah’s Witnesses View Education?", accessed December 3, 2023, https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/jw-education-school/ .	Additional info: Ploeg, V. L. "Lack of Education Leads to Lost Dreams and Low Income for Many Jehovah's Witnesses.", last modified February 19, accessed December 3, 2023, https://www.npr.org/2017/02/19/510585965/poor-education-leads-to-lost-dreams-and-low-income-for-many-jehovahs-witnesses .
		Rather than acquiring secular degrees and titles after their names, true Christians focus on obtaining “letters of recommendation” by engaging as fully as possible in the field ministry.— <i>Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-3.</i>	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2013. "“Slave for Jehovah”." The Watchtower—Study Edition, 15. Accessed December 3, 2023, https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/w20131015/slave-for-jehovah/#p22 .	

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